

The ancient Roman statesman Cicero once wrote, “A room without a book is like a body without a soul.” Containing both information and inspiration, books are invaluable tools to discovery for individuals of any age, but for youth, access to books is instrumental to their academic achievement. With the assistance of the Library of Congress, your local school or library can diversify its book collection and enhance children’s learning in the process.

The Library of Congress conducts a unique book donation program that helps educational institutions and certain nonprofit tax-exempt organizations build their library collections and introduce children to a greater variety of books. The world’s largest repository of books and other texts, the Library of Congress contains more than 130 million items. It receives approximately 20,000 items each day, only half of which is destined for the library’s own permanent collection.

These remaining items go to the Library of Congress Surplus Books Program, which is comprised of a variety books, audio and visual cassettes, and some maps. Most of these materials are meant for secondary and higher education levels, but there are often items appropriate for elementary school-aged children as well. Stock changes frequently as books are received and donated daily, but there is always an assortment of thousands of fiction and nonfiction items on the humanities, history, area studies, social sciences, education, science, and foreign languages.

Many Nebraska communities have traditionally prioritized local and school libraries and other educational outreach initiatives. To learn more, non-profit, educational, and government institutions and organizations wishing to participate in the Library of Congress Surplus Books Program should contact my Washington, D.C. office at 202.225.4806.